

Where can I get a mammogram?

- Ask your doctor or nurse.
- Ask your local health dept. or clinic.
- Call the Cancer Information Service at 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)

How to Perform a Breast Self-Examination

It is important to check each month for any changes, such as lumps or dimples, in the breast. Any changes need to be reported to your health practitioner.

- **Lying Down:** Starting with your right breast, place a pillow under your right shoulder and put your right hand under your head. Use the fingers on your left hand and check the entire area of the right breast, using small circles and following an up and down pattern. Use light, medium and firm pressure over each area of the breast. Repeat these steps on your left breast.
- **Before a Mirror:** Stand in front of a mirror and look for any changes in the way the breast looks. Check for dimpling or discharge from the nipple. As you look in the mirror, follow these steps:
 - Stand with your arms resting at your side.
 - Stand with your arms overhead.
 - Stand with your hands on your hips and firmly flex the chest muscles.
- Bend forward.
Each step should be done while looking in the mirror.
- **In the Shower:** Raise your right arm and with a soapy hand with fingers remaining flat, check your right breast. Use the fingers on your left hand and check the entire breast area using small circles and following an up and down pattern. Use light, medium and firm pressure over each area of the breast. Repeat these steps on your left breast.

courtesy of



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Breast Cancer

*the best
prevention is
early detection*

Basic Facts About Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women aged 40-44 and the leading cause of cancer death in women 15-54. One out of every eight women in the United States will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Approximately 80% of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease. All women are at risk and there are no known causes or cures for breast cancer. More often than not, breast lumps are not cancerous, but all lumps should be examined by a health care professional.

Early detection is the best way to beat breast cancer. Mammography and clinical breast examinations have been shown to reduce breast cancer mortality. A little over half of women 40 and over in California have had a mammogram within the last year.

Most women who found breast cancer in its early stages and received treatment are alive and well five years later.

Myths and Facts about the Risk of Developing Breast Cancer

Myth: Breast cancer is preventable.

Fact: There is no known way to prevent breast cancer, and the cause of the disease has not been determined. Early detection followed by prompt treatment offers the best chance for surviving breast cancer.

Myth: Only women get breast cancer.

Fact: Breast cancer is rare in men, but it does occur in roughly 1,000 men each year. In normal men, small rudiments of breast ducts may be found in the center of the breast, beneath the areola and nipple. The vast majority of breast cancers in men, therefore, arise in this area, rather than in the outer quadrants so commonly affected in women.

Myth: Only women with known "risk factors" get breast cancer.

Fact: Over 80% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no identifiable "risk factors." All women are at risk and risk increases with age.

Myth: Only women with a family history of breast cancer are at risk.

Fact: The majority of women with breast cancer have no family history of the disease. A woman whose mother, sister, daughter or grandmother had breast cancer has an increased risk of developing the disease.

Myth: Breast cancer is contagious.

Fact: Cancer is not a communicable disease. It results from uncontrolled growth of cells in a person's own body. These changes cannot affect other people's cells.

Myth: Small-breasted women cannot get breast cancer.

Fact: The amount of breast tissue a woman has does not affect her risk of developing breast cancer.

Myth: Breast feeding causes or protects against breast cancer.

Fact: No studies have shown that breast feeding causes breast cancer. Some studies have suggested that breastfeeding may

reduce a woman's risk of developing the disease. However, studies are still ongoing on this topic. A woman who breastfeeds her children can still get breast cancer.

Early Detection and Mammography

Why should I have a mammogram?

A mammogram can find breast cancer that is too small for you, your doctor, or your nurse to feel. The American Cancer Society recommends that all women age 40 and older have a mammogram every year. Women in their 40s who are at average risk for breast cancer should also get a mammogram every one to two years. Women who are at high risk of breast cancer should seek expert medical advice about whether to begin mammography before age 40.

What is meant by high and average risk for breast cancer?

Most women are considered to be at average risk for breast cancer. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. There are a number of risk factors that cause a woman to be at high risk for breast cancer. Women should consult a health professional to determine their risk level. Some examples of risk factors are:

- *Having first child after age 30*
- *Other breast disease*
- *Family history of breast cancer*

How often should I get a mammogram?

The American Cancer Society recommends that all women age 40 and older have a mammogram every year.